BASKET BALL
for
Beginners

By
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DENVER ATHLETIC CLUB
DENVER, COLORADO

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INTRODUCTION

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This booklet is prepared especially for beginners in the game of Basket Ball. It is the result of my own experience in teaching and developing players for the past 20 years.

Form in Basket Ball is just as essential to the development of the player as in any other sport. Bad habits formed at the start stick to the player. Improper start will limit a player's development and advancement, while the proper start will allow the player to progress evenly to the full limit of his capacity. The start in the right way develops better players and better teams.

The following rules provide, I believe, all the fundamentals essential for the beginner to bear in mind up to the time, when he becomes sufficiently expert to devise such additions and variations as every advanced and expert player necessarily develops in the course of his game.
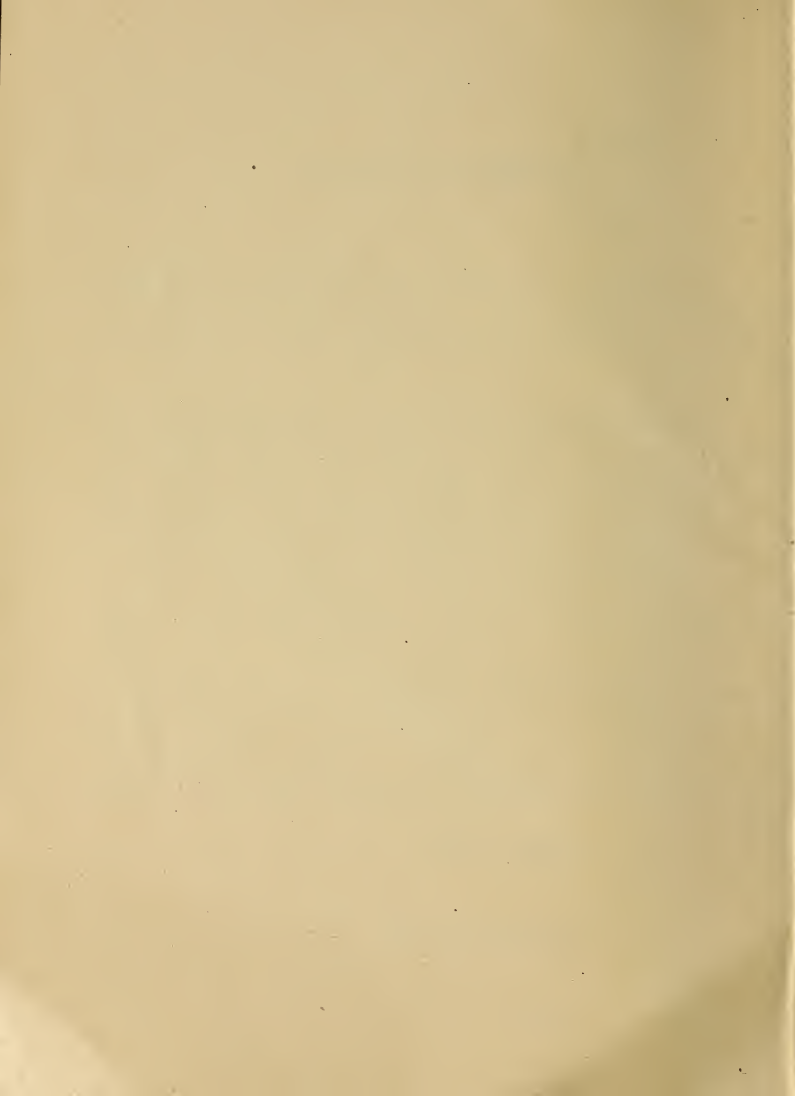
Basket Ball for Beginners

BY JOSEPH T. RUSSELL

The first impression a beginner has on coming on the basket ball court is the vastness of the court and the height of the baskets. He secures possession of the ball and tries to "shoot" a basket. With an under handed throw, standing a short distance away, he makes a trial throw. It seems to be a difficult thing to do. If other players are on the floor he proceeds to learn by imitation. An experienced player can very easily give the beginner the wrong start. He dashes at the ball, picks it up on the go, jumps, and throws for the basket in his own individual style. Sometimes using "english" or a twist on the ball, and other times he does not.

The beginner tries to do the same way. But in his throw, the jump, the speed, and the throw will be too strong and high. Unless corrected it will take him many, many tries, and sometimes days, before he will cage the ball. The men will be traveling a circle, each taking a turn at throwing for the basket, the rotary motion, his place in line, and the speed displayed, will cause the beginner to get the wrong methods.

Now the proper method to start for the beginner is: To take a standing position in front of and to one side of the basket, with the ball in both hands at the chest, without jumping, push the ball from the chest; hit the back board just above and a little to one side of

the basket, for his throw. The throw or push is just high enough to clear the basket. Do not put "english" or a twist on the ball. After a few trials he will soon find the "spot" on the back board and will cage the ball regularly.

The next step is the same shot, with a jump, from the standing position. Use same push or throw until he has accommodated the throw to the jump, which will require less height and speed for the throw, than from a standing position. Then he is ready to come forward with a dash; receive the ball from a player placed under the basket to pass, jump and throw, using the same method as from a standing position.

This close-up shot is sometimes called the "floater", the "dead shot", or the "sure shot". I like the latter name best.

It would be best to start handling the ball with two hands. In grasping the ball spread the fingers wide, it will give a firmer grip and better control in the pass and the throw. In shooting for the basket to avoid "english" make the push from the chest and point the fingers straight ahead. Do not bend the wrist upward. On a two-handed under hand throw, place the hands well under the ball with the fingers spread wide. On a two-handed over head throw place the hands well behind the ball.

Individuality has a great deal to do with how a player shoots for the basket. Some are stronger in the right arm than in the left, while others are more even in strength of the arms. A few individuals can do better

with a one-handed shot, close-up, than they can with the two-handed shot. This individuality develops as the player becomes more advanced. Better results can be obtained in the one-handed shot from close-up position by using the "shot put" throw. In the "shot put" throw, the ball is held in one hand on the shoulder, and the throw is made with an upward push. It is advisable to stick to the two-handed throws as they can be controlled easier.

I do not believe in "english" or twirling the ball, it takes too much practice to make a goal, although it is true some players can throw the ball a longer distance by using "english". The word "english" is used a great deal in billiards and pool games. But the "english" is not put on the cue ball unless the player is trying to make the cue ball take a greater angle. With years of practice an expert can make the ball "behave".

Now liken the back board to the cushion, the basket ball to the cue ball, and the goal to the pocket. Would the expert player use "english" to place the ball in the pocket, first hitting the cushion? No he would not. In the basket ball game the player has a great advantage, there is no obstruction in the way of his bank for the basket. He does not have to put "english" on the ball. He uses straight angles when playing against the back board.

The regulation back board is made of hard wood or glass and in the majority of cases is placed against a solid wall or balcony. The rebound of the inflated basket ball is very great and therefore in using the back

board the ball should not be thrown against it with force. On some floors where the back board is "fast" it would be well to play the shots for the basket alone.

The goal is attached to the back board at right angles and is raised 10 feet above the floor. If this same size ring was marked on the floor and a player was given the ball to drop into the ring, he would get **over** the ring to do it. Therefore in throwing for the basket to make a goal, the ball should have height enough to drop downward thru the ring. The basket being 10 feet above the floor, it is logical to say that a throw, from any distance, without using the back board, if only raised 11 feet, will not go into the basket.

The space on the floor between the straight lines, under the basket, to the large circle surrounding the Foul throwing lines, are called the Free Throw Lanes. Using these lines as a guide all throws made within this radius should be thrown against the back board. All throws outside of this radius should be thrown to drop thru the basket without hitting the back board. That means that the throws outside of this radius must be **high, arched** shots.

The throws made while going toward the basket are caged more times than those made while going away from the basket. I will venture to say that 9 out of 10 goals made in a game will be made when the player is going toward the basket. There is a rule in the game that allows a player to stop when he receives the ball while on the run. Then another rule, that allows one step to be made in making a pass or a throw for the

basket. This being true it would be well to practice going toward the basket when trying to make a goal. If the ball is received as the player is going away from the basket, or the dribble is being made away from it, stop, step in the direction of the basket and throw for the goal. The one step should, if possible, be made toward the basket when throwing for a goal, as the eye accommodates itself quicker to the distance when going forward, than when going backward.

Habits of practice stick to the player in the game. If he practices throws and at the same time jumps away from the basket he will unconsciously do that same way in the game. Practice forms habits and good habits in the game is what makes a man a good player.

In throwing from the Foul line, the player should train himself so that at least 8 out of 10 throws will go thru the basket. This is possible. The throw here is more mechanical than any other shot in the game. It is from the same distance, the same direction, and plenty of time is allowed.

The player takes a stand behind the Foul line. The feet are spread to secure a firm stanch; the ball is held for a two-handed under hand shot; the knees are bent without raising the heels; the body is bent a little forward; the arms are straight and held straight throughout the entire movement. Then the body and knees are straightened, and the arms brought up for the throw, all movements at the same time. It is a high, arched shot and the aim is for the basket, using the back of the rim for a guide. The arms continue on upward even

after the ball has left the hands. The throw should not over balance the body so that the player steps on or over the Foul line.

The player makes the same motions with his arms, legs, and body each time until he has located the proper amount of strength to use. The position each time is the same. He tries to be as mechanical as it is humanly possible. A trained gymnast, that has well developed co-ordination of brain and muscle, can do best in a throw of this nature.

At this time the beginners can put some interest in their practice by counting the number of throws made in succession, either on the "sure shot" or from the foul line. See how many can be made in five or ten trials. Two or more players can have a game by taking turns in shooting for the basket from the position they receive the ball. Goals made close up count 2 points, goals made from outside the radius of the Free Throw Lane lines counts 5 points. 21 points is a game. If a player goes above 21 points he breaks and begins over again. Another game of "21" can be played, by each player taking three throws. The first from the foul line, if made to count 5 points. The second from position the ball is received, if made to count 3 points. The third from position the ball is received, if made to count 1 point. The "break" is also in this game and one step is allowed in throwing for the basket.

To practice the pass, the beginners can form a circle and pass the ball from one to another by using various throws. Two-handed push from the chest; two-handed

over head; two-handed under hand; two-handed from right shoulder; two-handed from left shoulder; one-handed right side; one-handed left side; one-handed ("the hook") over head; one-handed under hand; "base ball"; and "shot put". Now make this a moving circle and pass to the next player in front, allowing for the moving man by passing in front of him. This is a very good warm-up for a team before the game.

Another way to practice the pass is for two or more players to "work" the ball up and down the court. Using a short pass, and throwing the ball in front of the man who receives. At the end of the court one of the players shoots for the basket. Then the ball is "worked" by short passes to the other end.

A game of "Keep-away" will help the passing. Players are divided to even sides, and one side tries to keep the ball away from the other side. When the ball is in possession of either side the other will try to get it. Follow the Basket Ball Rules as closely as possible or the play will become rough.

In passing the ball in-bounds from out-bounds, and the player in possession of the ball is guarded closely, it would be well to "feint" a throw to get room for the pass. The "feint" is not only good to use from out-bounds, but during the play in-bounds it will deceive an opponent. A "feint" throw for the basket and a pass instead to another player can be worked successfully.

When receiving the ball on a pass keep your eyes on the ball. Do not trust yourself to take the eyes off the ball until you have one or both hands on the ball.

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There is one rule that helps one to be a good player in all games where a ball is used. Whether the game be Basket Ball, Foot Ball, Golf, Hand Ball, or Base Ball, i. e., "Keep your eye on the ball".

To practice the dribble take the ball up and down the court by bounding it on the floor, using the best hand. A right handed man dribbles with the right hand only. Try dribbling in a circle; then try a zig-zag course up and down the court. After the player becomes more proficient he can bound the ball in dribbling from one hand to the other.

Station a player to guard and try dribbling past him for a shot at the basket. The dribble rule allows one dribble in the air. After trying to pass the guard by dribbling on the floor, bound the ball on the floor until close to the guard then dribble once in the air to get pass.

Study the dribble rule carefully. You cannot run or carry the ball. The dribble rule takes that place. You can dribble all over the court if you observe the rule. In a game it is bad form to dribble when a pass toward your own goal can be made.

Guarding an opponent who has possession of the ball takes skill and practice. There is one fundamental rule to follow that will help to keep from fouling: "Play the ball and not the man".

Get both hands on the ball, without reaching around an opponent, and you are on equal basis with him. Put your weight on the ball and his pass will be poor. To take the ball away, strength and skill are

called into play. A sudden quick jerk will sometimes do it, a "pivot" is another way, and another is to push the ball downward out of his grasp. If an opponent "pivots" on being guarded, move around to the opposite side to his turn, and get both hands on the ball.

To "pivot" "while retaining possession of the ball", a part turn or more is made by stepping around on one place on the floor, without "progressing in any direction". A "pivot" is very successful and useful when about to be guarded as it is a difficult thing to guard a player from the rear, it "usually results in personal contact, which is a personal foul."

Guarding an opponent by using the arms extended straight sideways or over head will seldom get the ball or a "held ball".

Guard an opponent who has the ball out-bounds by putting both hands, arms bent, elbows pointing down, in front of the chest. Follow the ball with the hands thru the "feints", but do not extend arms to full length, and on the pass, one or both hands can cover the ball so that it will be trapped or stopped. Keep your eyes on the ball do not watch an opponent's eyes.

A player in covering an opponent, in anticipation of a pass, does not stay close to him; but near enough to come in and intercept the pass and far enough away to let the player making the pass think that he is open. Long passes are easier to intercept than short passes.

Beginners have a bad habit of batting the ball after a missed shot at the opponents' basket. The right way is

to catch the ball and make a pass or dribble toward your own goal. It is correct to bat the ball a short distance into the hands of a player on your own team, but be sure of the play before batting the ball.

The Center must train for the jump just the same as the high jumper trains for a track meet. Plenty of practice and training. Centers are allow to stand in their own half of the circle in any manner they choose. One arm must be in contact with the back until the the tap off. If it is possible, try and get a lift with the other arm on the jump. Keep the wrist and fingers stiff and rigid in the tap off, this will add to the height. The majority of plays begin with the tap off at center.

Most every player on a team at one time or another, during a game, will jump as at center, so it would be well to practice the tap off.

In conclusion let me call your attention to a few important points. "English" or the twist on a ball is not for beginners. Use the two-handed pass or in shooting for the basket. Habits of practice must be good habits. "Play the ball and not the man". "Keep your eye on the ball".

Summary of Rules for Beginners

There are 5 players on a team. Captain is the spokeman for his team. Substitute reports to Scores, does not enter the court until play has been suspended, reports to Referee. A player may re-enter the game once, except for disqualification for four personal fouls, or other disqualifications. Cannot leave court without permission of Referee or Umpire, until time of half is called.

Ball must enter the basket from above to score. A player is out of bounds when he touches the line or out side of line. The ball is out of bounds when it touches the boundary line on the floor outside of line, the supports of the back board, or a player touches it when he is out of bounds. Two players withholding the ball from play by having one or both hands on it, or one player being closely guarded, a "held ball" is declared and the ball is tossed up between them as at center.

One step is allowed in making a pass, starting a dribble, and making a throw for the goal. More than one step or progressing in any direction is a foul. If the ball is caught while running the player is allowed to stop.

Dribbling is made by throwing, batting, bounding, rolling, fumbling, or muffing the ball and touching it again, before another player touches it. A goal made after a dribble counts. A dribble is finished when the ball stops, or it is touched by both hands simultaneously.

Holding is personal contact with an opponent, blocking is stopping an opponent without the ball. Holding, blocking, tripping, pushing, and charging are personal fouls.
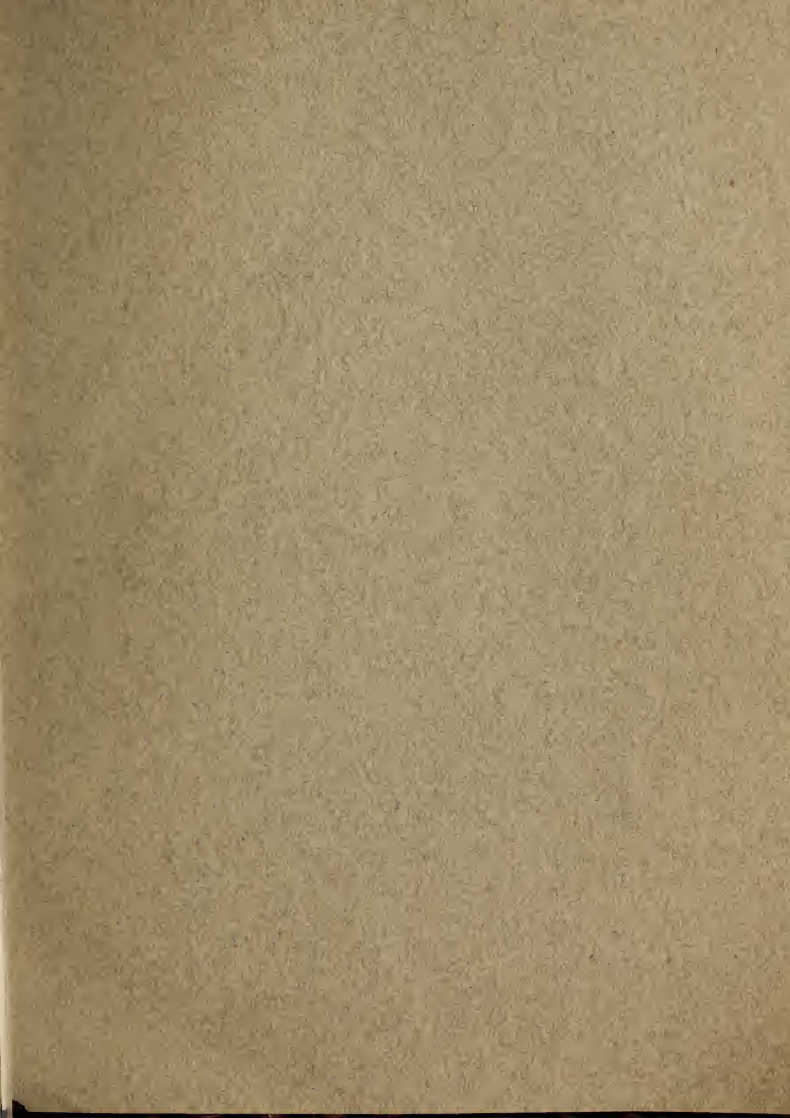
20 minutes to a half. 10 minutes between halves. Game starts by Referee throwing ball up at center. Centers stand in own half of circle, one hand in contact with middle of the small of his back, jumps for tap off, hand to back until tap off.

2 points scored for goals made from field, 1 point made by goal from foul line. Team scoring greater number of points wins.

10 seconds are allowed to make a Free Throw when foul is called. All players must stay outside of Free Throw Lane until ball has touched basket or back board, except player making throw, who cannot touch or cross Foul line until ball has touched basket or back board. He cannot pass to another player on a Free Throw.

5 seconds are allowed to make throw in from out of bounds. The player cannot throw for basket from out of bounds, nor step in-bounds on making throw, nor play the ball until another player touches it. A player cannot interfere with another who has the ball out of bounds by reaching over boundary line, or crossing the line.

A technical foul is called on player making a second dribble, running with the ball, kicking it, or striking it with the fist.